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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2006

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Erdogan to Putin: We Will Not Let US Use Turkish Bases to Strike Iran - Hurriyet
UN, US to Take Action on Cyprus Soon - Milliyet
Vienna Won't Block EU-Turkey Accession Talks - Milliyet
US Bombs Kill 14 in a Family in Iraq - Aksam
Bush Abandons Plans to Rebuild Iraq - Hurriyet
US to Spend 1 Billion USD to Build Embassy in Baghdad - Aksam
Political Ban Stirs Tensions in East Jerusalem - Sabah
Bush Loses Support of US Military - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Wilson: Military Operations against Iran, Syria Not on the US Agenda - Zaman
US Won't Allocate Additional Funds for Iraq's Rebuilding - Cumhuriyet
Sunnis Bargain for Autonomous Zone in Iraq - Cumhuriyet
Sunnis Divided in Coalition Talks - Radikal
Sunnis to Join Shiites, Kurds in Coalition Talks - Yeni Safak
26 Percent of Americans Believe Iraq Has WMD - Radikal
Palestinians Kick Off Campaign, Election Date Unclear - Zaman
Pneumonia Kills 35 Children in Kashmir - Radikal
Iran Bans Newspaper, Women's Magazine - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Ambassador Wilson Meets Turkish Officials: US Ambassador to Ankara, Ross Wilson, had lunch on Tuesday with the Turkey-US Parliamentary Friendship Group, including AKP lawmaker and the head of the group Egemen Bagis, the head of the parliamentary commission for foreign affairs Mehmet Dulger, and Culture Minister Atilla Koc, papers report. Wilson said during the lunch that the fight against the PKK will continue, and that a special package of measures will be implemented against the terror organization, adding that Turkey, the US and Iraq had to carry out their responsibilities in the fight against terrorism. The Ambassador stressed that tackling the PKK problem only in northern Iraq was not enough, and that cooperation with European countries was needed. "Zaman" quotes Ambassador Wilson as saying that the US and Turkey have a 'close and effective' working relationship in the fight against terrorism, and that the determination that has been displayed by the US administration and President Bush with regard to the PKK continues. According to Wilson, the US administration believes that an effective government in Iraq will mean better protection of borders and prevention of terror. Wilson noted that he called his old friend Ambassador Unal Cevikoz in Baghdad after the Turkish envoy survived an assassination attempt on Monday. 'The attack against Ambassador Cevikoz shook us,' Wilson said. He also stated that military action against Iran and Syria was not on the agenda of the US. Wilson said that he wanted to establish direct contact with Turkish people and lawmakers to reduce anti-American sentiments in Turkey. Turkish

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lawmakers attending the lunch said in response to Wilson's remarks that ties between Turkey and the United States will be better. Former Turkish FM Yasar Yakis told Wilson that the word 'crisis' had two meanings in Chinese. 'It connotes both a risk and an opportunity. We must create an opportunity out of the negatives we have experienced,' Yakis said. "Radikal" reports Wilson as saying that the US will hold meetings with Russia to seek a settlement of the Cyprus problem.

Erdogan Assures Putin Turkey Will Not Allow US to Strike Iran: "Hurriyet," quoting unidentified US intelligence sources, reports from Washington that in July 2005, Prime Minister Erdogan 'guaranteed' Russian President Putin that permission will not be given to the US to use Turkish bases to stage an attack against Iran. Erdogan's commitment necessitated visits by a number of high-level US officials, including FBI and CIA directors, to Turkey, in an effort to ensure Ankara's support in possible military operations against Iran, the US sources said. During a recent visit to the US, Land Forces Commander General Yasar Buyukanit was also asked to provide logistics, intelligence and security support to the US in case of a military attack against Iran. In an effort to convince Turkey, FBI Director Mueller allegedly presented Turkish officials with documents showing Iranian support for the PKK. Erdogan merely listened to the demands of visiting US officials, and gave no pledges. The influence of Putin is strong enough to block Turkish support for the US, "Hurriyet" comments.

US Can Strike Iran Without Using Turkish Bases: "Hurriyet" reports from Washington unidentified US intelligence sources as saying that President Bush has almost completed his plans for striking nuclear facilities in various provinces in Iran. The US has asked for the support of several NATO countries, as well as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Pakistan, Oman and Azerbaijan. Poland has promised to give all necessary backing to the US. An unidentified US military expert told "Hurriyet" that the US had the capacity to carry out an extensive military operation against Iran without using Turkish bases or airspace.

Rice to Visit Turkey: Turkish papers report that Secretary Rice will visit Turkey either this month or in February to discuss Iran, Syria, and the PKK.

Ahmadinejad Wants to Visit Turkey: The all-news broadcaster NTV said in a commentary on Wednesday that Iranian President Ahmadinejad wanted to make his first official trip abroad to Turkey before the 'Nevruz' feast in April, the beginning of the new year in Iran. The Iranian government, under international pressure regarding its nuclear program, is preparing a regional tour for Ahmadinejad in an effort to establish closer ties with regional countries. Ankara, bearing in mind the recent remarks by Ahmadinejad on Israel, and Tehran's refusal to cooperate on nuclear issues, is reluctant to host the Iranian president. Tehran wants Ankara to renew an invitation that had been made by President Sezer to former President Khatami during a visit to Iran in 2002. Diplomatic sources believe that inviting Ahmadinejad at a time when Secretary Rice is preparing to visit Turkey will annoy the US Administration, NTV said.

Karzai Due to Visit Turkey: Afghan President Hamid Karzai will visit Turkey from January 4-7 as the official guest of President Sezer to discuss bilateral relations, Turkey's contribution to Afghanistan's rebuilding, and regional matters, the Turkish President's office said on Tuesday.

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Turkish Anti-Terror Board Works in Coordination with US: Turkey's National Security Council (NSC) recommended at a meeting in December the use of an anti-terror board chaired by Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul to coordinate government efforts in the fight against the separatist PKK, "Radikal" says in a news commentary. The Anti-Terror High Board will ensure the implementation of action plans for Turkey's eastern and southeastern provinces, and foreign, economic and social aspects of the fight against the PKK. After the board held its first meeting under the chairmanship of Gul, Turkish intelligence agency MIT Undersecretary Emre Taner was sent to northern Iraq to meet with Kurdistan regional leader Massoud Barzani after the constitutional referendum in Iraq on October 15. Ankara later encouraged the participation of Sunni groups in the Iraqi elections on December 15. The process was coordinated with the US as seen in the visits of US national security adviser Stephen Hadley and CIA Director Porter Goss to Turkey, says "Radikal."

Patriarch Bartholomew Travels to US: The Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I left for the US on Wednesday to attend masses to celebrate the centenary of the Orthodox community in the US, Cihan News Agency (CNA) reports. At a press conference before his departure, Bartholomew I said that he had been invited by the US Orthodox community in Florida. Bartholomew I noted that he will not hold political meetings during his visit.

Report Outlines Human Rights Violations in Turkey in 2005: In a report reviewing 2005, Turkish human rights organization "Mazlum-Der" highlighted the controversial Armenian conference held in Istanbul, and lawsuits against novelist Orhan Pamuk, journalist Hrant Dink, and Professor Baskin Oran as examples of restrictions on freedom of expression in Turkey. "Yeni Safak" cites the report as saying that 203 were killed by unknown assailants, and 336 were killed in clashes with security forces in Turkey last year. Forty-one infringement of religious freedom cases were reported. Courts ruled for a total of 46 years of prison term in a violation of free speech in lawsuits filed against several persons. Sixty-two cases of pressure and intimidation against journalists and media outlets were reported. Twelve women were murdered in 'honor killings.' Asylum rights were violated in 51 cases, and 1,832 immigrants were freed from human traffickers, according to the "Mazlum-Der" report.

Military Support for Bush Declines: Several Turkish papers report that US military support for President Bush's Iraq policies has gone down 11 percent in the past year, to 53 percent last year from 64 percent in 2004, according to a survey conducted by "Military Times."

Dogan Group Buys Former Uzan Group TV Stations: Turkey's leading media conglomerate Dogan Group bought on Tuesday four cable and satellite TV licenses that previously belonged to the Uzan Group for USD 676,000. The purchases strengthened Dogan Group's position as the leading media conglomerate in Turkey, papers say.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Russia's Gas Price War

"The Rage of Russia"
Sami Kohen observed in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (01/04): "At a first glance, it seems that it is Russia's natural right to increase the price of the natural gas it sells to Ukraine, but there are some problematic points in

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the Putin administration's decisions. The first problem is the excessive prices demanded by Russia (a raise from \$50 to \$230). This goes against trade 'laws of feasibility.' Secondly, everything indicates that Russia has not only a commercial motivation, but a political one as well. It is selling gas to the rich Western Europe countries at a relatively high price and to the countries loyal to Russia, rather cheaply. For example, Russia charges Moldavia and Georgia \$160, Belarus \$47 and Armenia \$54. The crisis occurred with Ukraine, because Putin wanted to teach Ukraine a lesson, damage Yushchenko's influence, and send a message to the western world. Naturally, this situation not only caused Russia to clash with Kiev but, with the West as well. And that is the most worrying and dangerous part of this whole situation. Immediately after Russia's price increase, 'cold war' winds started to blow. No one will benefit from such tensions, not even Russia."

"Energy and Strategy"
Yilmaz Oztuna commented in the conservative-nationalist "Turkiye" (01/04): "The Russian Federation showed the world how to use energy as a strategic tool. Putin decreased gas supplies to Ukraine and indirectly sent a warning to countries dependent on Russia for gas, including Turkey. Under these conditions, the people of Ukraine will participate in the March 25 elections in the dark, shivering in the cold. Putin is indirectly warning Ukrainians that if they vote for Yushchenko's pro-American, pro-Europe party in the parliamentary elections, than he'll do his best to leave them in the dark and in the cold."

WILSON